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Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention

Seventh periodic report of States parties to be presented in 2014

Burkina Faso*

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Contents

		Page
	Acronyms and abbreviations	5
	Introduction	8
	Part I: General information on the situation in Burkina Faso	9
I.	Demographic, social and economic situation	9
II.	Political, institutional and administrative situation	10
	Part II: Implementation of the Convention	11
I.	Principle of gender equality and elimination of discrimination against women (articles 1, 2 and 3)	11
1.	Legal framework	11
2.	Institutional framework	11
3.	Policies, plans, programmes and projects to combat discrimination against women	13
II.	Implementation of articles 4-16	14
1.	Temporary special measures (article 4)	14
1.1.	Political participation of women	14
1.2.	Education	14
1.3.	Health	14
1.4.	Economic activities	15
1.5.	Employment and vocational training	15
2.	Combating gender stereotypes (article 5)	15
2.1.	Women's access to land	15
2.2.	Domestic and spousal violence	15
2.3.	Forced/early marriages	16
2.4.	Sexual harassment	17
2.5.	Female genital mutilation (FGM)	18
2.6.	Measures taken for excluded persons and older persons	19
3.	Measures against trafficking in women and exploitation of the prostitution of women (article 6)	19
3.1.	Trafficking in women	19
3.2.	Prostitution	20
4.	Political and public life of women (articles 7-8)	20
4.1.	National plan (article 7)	20
4.2.	Women representing the country at the regional and international levels (article 8)	21

5. Nationality of women (article 9) 22
6. Measures adopted and activities carried out in the area of education (article 10) 22
6.1. Primary education 22
6.2. Specific measures for the education of disabled persons, particularly girls and women 23
6.3. Budget share allocated to education 24
6.4. Secondary and higher education 24
6.5. Non-formal education and literacy 25
6.6. Constraints and difficulties related to the education/literacy of girls/women 25
7. Employment and vocational training (article 11) 26
7.1. Legal framework 26
7.2. Right to equal remuneration 26
7.3. Policies and programmes for the promotion of women's employment 26
7.4. Women and unemployment 27
8. Access to health care (article 12) 27
8.1. Overview and organization of the medical system 27
8.2. Weaknesses of the health care system 28
8.3. Measures taken by the State in the area of health 28
8.4. Mental health of women 29
8.5. Establishment of follow-up and accountability mechanisms 30
8.6. Strengthening of the role of midwives 30
8.7. Improved access of women to health care in the Sahel region 30
8.8. Situation with regard to maternal and child mortality 30
8.9. Family planning and abortion 31
8.10. Women and HIV/AIDS 31
9. Enjoyment of social and economic benefits by women (article 13) 32
9.1. Social protection and social security 32
9.2. Measures taken to improve the economic situation of women 32
10. Rural women (article 14) 33
10.1. Access of rural women to credit 33
10.2. Access of rural women to health care 33
10.3. Access of rural women to land 33
10.4. Access of rural women to vocational training and literacy 34
10.5. Access of rural women to water and sanitation 34

10.6. Rural women's access to decision-making 34
11. Equality before the law and in civil matters (article 15) 35
11.1. Background 35
11.2. Measures taken 35
12. Matrimonial and family law (article 16) 35
12.1. Background 35
12.2. Measures taken 36
Part III: Implementation of recommendations **36**
Conclusion **39**

Acronyms and abbreviations

ADEP	PUGSADA Association for Support and Enlightenment
AEPS	Simplified drinking water supply
AFJ/BF	Association of Women Lawyers of Burkina Faso
AME	Mothers educators' association
APE	Parents' association
APFR	Rural property certificate
CARMMA	Campaign on Accelerated Reduction of Maternal Mortality in Africa
CBO	Community-based association
CBDF	Burkina Faso Coalition for Women's Rights
CEB	Basic education district
CES	Economic and social council
CEPE	Certificate of primary elementary studies
CHR	Regional hospital centre
CIMDH	Interministerial Committee on Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law
CM2	Sixth grade
CMA	Medical centre with a surgery unit
CNE	National Council for Children
CNLP	National Council to Combat Female Circumcision
CNSEF	National Commission to Follow up on the Commitments of Burkina Faso regarding the Advancement of Women
COCOPGenre	Municipal Council for the Advancement of Women
CONALDIS	National Commission to Combat Discrimination against Women
CONAPGenre	National Council for the Advancement of Women
CONAREF	National Commission for Refugees
COREPGenre	Regional Council for the Advancement of Women
CPI	Itinerant pedagogical advisers
CRIGED	Gender and Development Research and Action Centre
CSC	Higher Council on Communication
CSO	Civil society organization

CSPS	Health and Social Promotion Centre
CVD	Village development council
DEFPG	Directorate of Girls' Education and Gender Equality
DEP	Directorate of Studies and Planning
DGPEF	General Directorate for the Promotion of Women's Entrepreneurship
DGPG	General Directorate for Gender Promotion
DSME	Directorate of Mother and Child Health
EDS	Demographic and Health Survey
EICVM	Comprehensive Survey of Household Living Conditions
FAARF	Fund to Support Income-generating Activities for Women
FAWE	Forum for African Women Educationalists
FBDES	Burkina Faso Fund for Social and Economic Development
GAR	Gross admission rate
GATPA	Active management of the third stage of labour
GER	Gross enrolment rate
HDI	Human Development Index
IEC	Information, education and communication
IEPD	Primary school inspector
INSD	National Institute of Statistics and Demography
IUTS	Single tax on wages and salary
MASSN	Ministry of Social Action and National Solidarity
MCA-BF	Millennium Challenge Account — Burkina Faso
MENA	Ministry of Education and Literacy
MPFG	Ministry for the Advancement of Women and Gender Equality
MVA	Manual vacuum aspiration of the uterus
NDI	National Democratic Institute
NGO	Non-governmental organization
PC/VEFF	Joint Programme to Combat Violence against Women and Girls
PEM	Modern water source
PMTCT	Prevention of mother-to-child transmission

PN-AEPA	National Plan for Water Supply and Sanitation
PNAS	National Policy for Social Action
PNDHPC	National Policy on Human Rights and Promotion of Civic Responsibility
PNDS	National Health Development Plan
PNG	National Gender Policy
PNJ	National Justice Policy
PNP	National Population Policy
PNSM	National Mental Health Programme
PRONAA	National Literacy Acceleration Programme
PSCE/JF	Special Job Creation Programme for Young Persons and Women
PSSM	Strategic Plan for Mental Health
RECIF/NGO	Information, Communication and training network for Women in NGOs
RGPH	General Population and Housing Census
SCADD	Strategy for Accelerated Growth and Sustainable Development
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
SNAEF	National Strategy for the Acceleration of Girls' Education
SNIS	National Health Information System
SOFIGIB	Burkina Faso Financing and Interbank Guarantee Company
SONU	Birth-care and emergency obstetric or neonatal care
STDs	Sexually transmitted diseases
TFPs	Technical and financial partners
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WILDAF	Women in Law and Development in Africa
WMW/ANBF	World March of Women/Action nationale du Burkina Faso

Introduction

1. Burkina Faso ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women on 28 November 1984 and the optional Protocol thereto on 26 July 2005. It thus undertook the obligation to submit every four years a report on the administrative, legal and social measures taken in order to prevent or eliminate discrimination against women and girls in all areas and to identify challenges in the implementation of such measures.

2. This seventh report, drawn up in accordance with article 18 of the Convention, covers the period 2007-2013.

3. The preparation of this report, which is the outcome of an inclusive and participatory procedure, has comprised the following stages:

- Establishment of a multisectoral committee, consisting of representatives of ministries, institutions and civil society organizations (CSOs), for the preparation of the report;
- Training in report-writing techniques for the members of the above committee by an international consultant, former member of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women;
- Establishment of a drafting team, consisting of multisectoral committee members;
- Consultations with and data collection from public and private institutions;
- Drawing up of the draft report;
- Consideration and adoption of the draft report by the National Commission to Follow up on the Commitments of Burkina Faso regarding the Advancement of Women (CNSEF);
- Validation of the draft report at a national workshop attended by representatives of ministries, institutions, civil society organizations, CSOs and the technical and financial partners (TFPs);
- Consideration of the draft report by the Interministerial Committee on Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CIMDH);
- Adoption of the report by the Council of Ministers;
- Transmission of the report to the United Nations.

4. The report comprises the following three parts:

- General information on the situation in Burkina Faso;
- Implementation of the Convention;
- Implementation of recommendations.

Part I: General information on the situation in Burkina Faso

I. Demographic, social and economic situation

5. Burkina Faso is a landlocked developing country with a tropical, predominantly Sahelian climate.

6. The country's economy, largely undiversified, is mainly based on agriculture and livestock breeding, which account for approximately 40 per cent of GDP, and relies primarily on the rural areas. Approximately 80 per cent of the rural population earn their livelihood by exploiting the land and other natural resources (water, forests and pastures), which, as a result, are affected by environmental degradation and demographic pressure.

7. The primary sector accounts for one third of GDP. Economic activity focuses on products such as cotton and livestock goods, and includes mining, currently under development, particularly for gold.

8. The country's economic performance is on the whole satisfactory despite a difficult external context and unprecedented exogenous shocks (floods, drought and the Ivorian crisis). Average economic growth attained 7.5 per cent in the period 2010-2012 compared to 5.8 per cent over the last 10 years. That increase was underpinned by the expansion of the mining sector (doubling of the gold output to 12.1 tons, with gold replacing cotton as top export product) and the dynamic development of the telecommunications sector.

9. Despite such tangible progress, much remains to be done given that in 2012 Burkina Faso ranked 183rd among 187 countries on the basis of the Human Development Index (HDI) published by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

10. In 2006, of the country's 14,017,262 inhabitants, 51.7 per cent were women (General Population and Housing Census (RGPH) 2006). In 2009, the National Institute of Statistics and Demography (INSD) forecasted the country's population in 2013 at 17,322,796 inhabitants, comprising 8,934,889 women and 8,357,967 men.

11. Persons under 15 and 20 account for, respectively, 46.4 and 59.1 per cent of the population. In the period 1996-2006, the average annual rate of increase of the population rose from 2.4 to 3.1 per cent.

12. Burkina Faso has more than 60 ethnic groups. Sociologically, each ethnic group has its own cultural values and social organization pattern.

13. According to RGPH 200660.5 per cent of the inhabitants are Moslems, 23.2 per cent Christians, 15.3 per cent animists, 0.6 per cent followers of other religions and 0.4 per cent persons without religion.

14. In 2010, the fertility rate was estimated at 6.0 children per woman, with 6.7 and 3.9 children per woman in the urban and rural areas, respectively (Demographic and Health Survey (EDS) 2010).

15. The population is experiencing impoverishment. According to the Comprehensive Survey of Household Living Conditions (EICVM) 2009, 46.7 per cent of the population live below the absolute poverty line, estimated at CFAF

130,735 per person per year, compared to 45.3 per cent in 1998. Poverty is significantly higher among women (47.1 per cent) than men (45.7 per cent).

16. Despite significant progress in recent years, access to basic education remains limited in the country. Although the gross enrolment ratio increased from 71.8 per cent in 2007 to 79.6 per cent in 2012, that still means that 29.4 per cent of children do not attend school. The education system continues to display considerable disparities related to gender, geographical area and place of residence. In 2011-2012, gross enrolment ratio (GER) at the national level was 81.1 among boys and 78.1 per cent among girls.

17. In the area of health, Burkina Faso faces multiple challenges. The maternal mortality rate is 307 per 100,000 live births, one of the highest in the world (Ministry of Health, 2012). The infant mortality rate decreased from 184 per 1,000 in 2006 to 81 per 1,000 in 2012.

18. In late 2011, the average prevalence of HIV/AIDS in the country was estimated at 1.1 per cent. The number of persons living with HIV/AIDS is estimated at 120,000, including 94,000 adults and 56,000 women (UNAIDS 2012 report).

II. Political, institutional and administrative situation

19. Over and above the republican institutions enshrined in the Constitution of 2 June 1991 and in order to consolidate the rule of law, Burkina Faso has accorded constitutional status to the following authorities:

- Ombudsman;
- Economic and Social Council (CES);
- Higher Council on Communication (CSC).

20. At the administrative level, Burkina Faso is divided into 13 regions, 45 provinces and 350 departments.

21. Burkina Faso made significant progress towards decentralization through the Government's decision to consolidate the system of local government countrywide. That process, which became effective with the municipal elections of 23 April 2006, was strengthened in connection with the combined (legislative and municipal) elections of 21 December 2012. Of the country's total number of 351 municipalities, 302 are rural and 49 urban. Between 2006 and 2012, the number of districts in the two major cities increased from 5 to 12 in Ouagadougou and from 3 to 7 in Bobo-Dioulasso.

22. Although it offered to women an opportunity to participate in the management of local affairs, the above process did not raise the percentage of women in local government bodies (see article 7).

Part II: Implementation of the Convention

I. Principle of gender equality and elimination of discrimination against women (articles 1, 2 and 3)

1. Legal framework

23. The law and regulations of Burkina Faso have evolved considerably since the presentation of the country's sixth periodic report on the implementation of the Convention.

24. At the national level, the following enactments, inter alia, should be noted:

- Act No. 029-2008/AN of 15 May 2008 on combating human trafficking and related practices;
- Act No. 30-2011 of 3 June 2011 on combating, and protecting the rights of persons living with, HIV/AIDS;
- Act No. 034-2009/AN of 16 June 2009 on rural land tenure, which inter alia establishes the principle of gender equality with regard to access to land in rural areas;
- Act No. 019-2009/AN amending Act No. 014-2001/AN of 3 July 2001 on the Electoral Code;
- Act No. 012-2010/AN of 1 April 2010 on the protection and promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities;
- Act No. 003-2011/AN of 5 April 2011 on the Forestry Code;
- Act No. 033-2012/AN of 11 June 2012 amending the Constitution and enshrining, in article 101 of the Constitution, the promotion of gender equality;
- Act No. 034-2012/AN of 2 July 2012 on agrarian and land reform, which in article 34 provides for equitable and secure access of all actors to rural land.

25. At the international and regional levels, the following two conventions were ratified:

- UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education, ratified on 4 September 2012;
- African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa, adopted on 22 October 2009.

2. Institutional framework

26. Various institutions are involved in the promotion and protection of women's rights in Burkina Faso.

27. The Ministry for the Advancement of Women was created on 10 June 1997 and reorganized by Decree No. 2013/PRES/PM/MPFG of 3 October 2013 in order to address matters related to gender equality. Renamed "Ministry for the Advancement

of Women and Gender Equality", it is responsible for the implementation of Government policy on women's advancement and on gender-related issues.

28. The Ministry's institutional capacity was enhanced through the creation of new structures, including the General Directorate for Gender Promotion (DGPG) and the General Directorate for the Promotion of Women's Entrepreneurship (DGPEF).

29. Approximately 2 per cent of the national budget is allocated to women's advancement and the promotion of gender equality (see Table 1 in the annex).

30. In 2013, the Ministry recruited 46 specialists (as advisers and women's education monitors).

31. In carrying out its missions, the Ministry is supported by the National Council for the Advancement of Women (CONAPGenre), with branches at the regional and commune levels (COREPGenre and COCOPGenre, respectively). The presidency of CONAPGenre is ensured by the Prime Minister and the vice-presidency by the Minister for the Advancement of Women and Gender Equality. Gender-mainstreaming units are created in ministries and institutions in order to mainstream the gender perspective in sectoral development policies.

32. The National Commission to Follow up on the Commitments of Burkina Faso regarding the Advancement of Women (CNSEF), created by Decree No. 2008-482/PRES/PM/MPF/MEF of 3 July 2008 to replace the National Commission to Combat Discrimination against Women (CONALDIS), is an advisory body consisting of representatives of ministries and CSOs. It formulates opinions and recommendations regarding the fulfilment of the country's commitments in the area of women's advancement.

The Ministry for Human Rights and the Promotion of Civic Values aims to promote and protect human rights and good citizenship. Through CIMDH and the National Human Rights Commission (CNDH), this Ministry seeks in particular to inform and sensitize the population with regard to human rights and international humanitarian law.

The Ministry of Social Action and National Solidarity plays an important role in the protection and advancement of the family, children, adolescents, and older or disabled persons. It participates extensively in combating violence against women and girls through a number of specific structures, such as the National Council to Combat Female Circumcision (CNLPE) and the National Council for Children (CNE).

33. Civil society includes various NGOs and associations working for the promotion and protection of women's rights and freedoms through awareness-raising, training, communication and advocacy activities, for instance the Association of Women Lawyers of Burkina Faso (AFJ/BF), the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE), the Information, Communication and training network for Women in NGOs (RECIF/NGO), Women in Law and Development in Africa (WILDAF), the Burkina Faso Coalition for Women's Rights (CBDF), Promo femmes et développement (Advancement of women and development), the PUGSADA Association for Support and Enlightenment (ADEP), and World March of Women/Action nationale du Burkina Faso (WMW/ANBF).

3. Policies, plans, programmes and projects to combat discrimination against women

34. Some of the documents concerning policies, plans, programmes and projects for combating discrimination against women are the following:

- Strategy for Accelerated Growth and Sustainable Development (SCADD), 2011-2015, a national reference framework for development, adopted by Decree No. 141/PRES/PM/MEF of 24 March 2011. Its goals 3, 4 and 6 call for primary education for all, gender equality, women's empowerment and improved maternal care. Main thrust 4 focuses on integrating cross-cutting priorities into development policies and programmes, one of whose activities consists in strengthening gender-inequality reduction programmes;
- National Population Policy (PNP), 2010-2030. It aims at high-quality human resources; reproductive patterns that help the couples, women, men and children to develop; and greater availability of resources for productive investment in the country;
- National Gender Policy (PNG), adopted by Decree No. 2009-672 PRES/PM/MEF/MPF of 7 October 2009, and a related action plan, 2011-2013. Their main goal is to promote inclusive and fair development for men and women by providing equal and equitable access to and control over resources and decision-making with due respect for human rights. The policy therefore seeks to eliminate all forms of gender inequalities and inequities so as to ensure every citizen's social, cultural, economic and political development. That resolve was confirmed through the enshrinement of the promotion of gender equality in the Constitution pursuant to Act No. 33-2012/AN of 11 June 2012 on constitutional revision;
- National Policy on Human Rights and Promotion of Civic Responsibility (PNDHPC), 2013-2022. The policy and its first action plan, 2013-2015, provide for the promotion and protection of the rights of specific groups, including;
- National Policy for Social Action (PNAS), adopted on 23 July 2007 by Decree No. 2007-480/PRES/PM/MASSN. It seeks to promote social well-being, particularly for individuals, families and vulnerable groups, on a fully participatory basis aimed at reducing social inequalities;
- National Justice Policy (PNJ), 2010-2019, adopted on 1 May 2010 by Decree No. 2010-216/PRES/PM/MJ, and a related action plan, 2010-2012. They safeguard women's and children's rights, particularly in connection with legal proceedings, the conditions of women's and girls' imprisonment, women's social rehabilitation, divorce and child custody.

35. The above policies are implemented by the ministries concerned, which ensure the relevant coordination with support and follow-up on the part of national actors as well as NGOs and TFPs.

II. Implementation of articles 4-16

1. Temporary special measures (article 4)

36. In recent years, the State of Burkina Faso has taken, at the political, economic, social and cultural levels, significant special measures which help to improve women's living conditions.

1.1. Political participation of women

37. In order to enhance the presence of women in political and decision-making bodies, Burkina Faso adopted Act No. 010-2009/AN of 16 April 2009, which establishes quotas for legislative and municipal elections. Under article 3 of the Act, every political party must ensure that its candidate lists effectively include at least 30 per cent of persons of either gender on pain of forfeiting 50 per cent of the public funding to which parties are entitled. Any party or group of parties which, in the final results, attains or exceeds 30 per cent of elected candidates of either gender is entitled to financial aid (article 6). Awareness-raising activities have been organized for the actors concerned in order to promote the implementation of the Act.

1.2. Education

38. The following measures have been taken:

- Coverage by the State of school fees and parents' association (APE) contributions for all girls enrolled in the first grade in public schools and prohibition of excluding a pupil for non-payment of the above contributions;
- Adoption in 2012 of the National Strategy for the Acceleration of Girls' Education (SNAEF), including free education, action against gender-based violence, reduction of dropping out, and non-formal education for adults and adolescents;
- Reservation of 56 per cent of technical education places and provision of science study grants for girls;
- Establishment of a special quota of 300 grants exclusively for female students. This has helped to reduce gender disparities among students.

39. CSOs support the Government's efforts in the implementation of such special measures by offering education grants and school supplies to girls in various study areas.

1.3. Health

40. In the period 2007-2013, political commitments were fulfilled and various programmes, projects and specific measures were implemented at the Ministry of Health and, in the long term, are expected to have a positive impact on the health of the population in general and of women and girls in particular.

41. Burkina Faso has acceded to various regional and international initiatives and strategies that promote the health of mothers and children. Fulfilment of those commitments has included, in particular, specific measures for maternal and child health (birth-care and emergency obstetric or neonatal care (SONU) subsidization,

free preventive care, reduction of the cost of contraceptives, and procurement of contraceptives under the State budget).

1.4. Economic activities

42. The following special measures are in progress:

- Establishment of the Unit of Support for Women's Entrepreneurship, with a CFAF 5 billion line of credit from the Burkina Faso Fund for Social and Economic Development of (FBDES), to provide women entrepreneurs with access to credit at acceptable terms;
- In 2014, establishment in the Burkina Faso Financing and Interbank Guarantee Company (SOFIGIB) of a CFAF 500 million fund earmarked for guaranteeing loans to women entrepreneurs.

1.5. Employment and vocational training

43. The Government has set put a special job-creation programme, 2011-2014, for young persons and women. It aims, inter alia, to build women's technical and financial capacities in all areas of economic life.

2. Combating gender stereotypes (article 5)

44. In Burkina Faso, women continue to be victims of various forms of violence. To remedy that, various activities have been undertaken to promote and protect the rights of women.

2.1. Women's access to land

45. Persisting social and cultural constraints, especially in rural areas, prevent women from owning and inheriting land. The Government has implemented relevant activities, which are referred to in connection with article 14.

2.2. Domestic and spousal violence

46. Women continue to be victims of physical and psychological violence based on customs and traditional practices. Statistics for 2011 include 413 women victims of spousal violence and 71 cases of women having become social outcasts.

47. Activities against such violence are carried out by the State and CSOs.

48. Activities undertaken in 2012 included:

- Training in women's rights for 500 paralegals;
- Study on the rights of women and girls, in combination with a programme for social dialogue with traditional and religious leaders;
- Coordination meetings with such leaders regarding violence against women.

49. The following activities took place in 2013:

- Workshop on the role of judicial authorities in combating violence against women;

- In the framework of the observance of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women (25 November), awareness-raising workshop for 60 journalists and publishers on "Gender and journalism: What role, and what image, for women in the media?";
- Study, followed by the formulation of guidelines, on the promotion of gender equality in the media; and training, for private and public media actors from the country's 13 regions, in the gender perspective in dealing with information.

50. Note should also be made of the following activities:

- Legal and social counselling centres, which in 2012 referred 83 women victims of violence to the Bobo-Dioulasso court of major jurisdiction;
- Legal assistance and support for 60 women victims of violence, under the Joint Programme to Combat Violence against Women and Girls (PC/VEFF), 2008-2010, in three pilot regions (Hauts Bassins, Sahel and Centre);
- Creation by the Ministry for the Advancement of Women and Gender Equality of a care service and toll-free helpline for gender-based violence victims, staffed with police officers who provide victim support;
- Textbook revision to remove formulations that belittle women and girls or their role;
- Information, education and communication (IEC) campaigns and training in children's and women's rights.

2.3. Forced/early marriages

51. Girls continue to be subjected to forced/early marriages. According to 2011 statistics, 1,164 and 266 girls were victims of, respectively, forced and early marriage. The prevalence of early marriage, 70 per cent overall, attains 77.3 per cent among rural girls. According to 2010-2013 statistics, 565 girls enrolled in school were victims of forced marriage.

52. Forced marriage is prohibited under article 376 of the Criminal Code. However, it is hard to enforce that provision because the Personal and Family Code provides a rigorous definition of marriage that does not cover traditional or religious weddings, while most forced/early weddings are traditional. It is therefore recommended that the prohibition should refer to "forced cohabitation" rather than "forced marriage" so as to be generally applicable (relevant activities are referred to in connection with article 16).

53. Note should also be made of the following activities:

- Panel discussion on forced and/or early marriages, held in Ouagadougou on 24 November 2011 as a contribution to combating such practices through information and awareness-raising;
- Pilot project entitled "Eliminating early marriage in Burkina Faso: a community protection, empowerment and intervention plan", implemented in the period 2008-2010 in five regions, with the following results:
  - Enhancement of the capacities of 144 mothers educators to help adolescents;

- Granting of full scholarships to 143 girls and financial support to 286 adolescent girls aged 12-19;
- Health care (pregnancy monitoring, repair of the effects of excision, family planning and prenatal consultations for approximately 150 teenagers);
- Psychosocial assistance to 332 early marriage victims and conviction of nine persons aged 50-65 for practicing early marriage of girls aged 12-17;
- Organization of seven advocacy meetings with traditional and religious leaders. The meetings permitted addressing 950 persons and forming partnerships with 120 community leaders (traditional chiefs and religious authorities) in order to secure their support for the enforcement of existing laws and the realization of the human rights of adolescent girls;
- Training and retraining in community activity facilitation techniques, and provision of means of transport (bicycles), for 24 relay units or committees (comprising 120 community leaders);
- Organization of the screening of 94 films, 140 forum theatre performances, 58 radio game shows and 46 thematic musical performances broadcast by community radio stations. These events had an audience of 200,626 persons, comprising 68,697 men, 93,147 women and 38,782 children;
- Training of 33 social workers in using the Psychosocial and Legal Assistance Guide, and of 48 physicians and nurses with a view to improving the quality of health care services;
- Outreach activities on early marriage by 10 associations identified for that purpose. The associations held 40 educational talks (based on film screenings) and 31 advocacy meetings, addressing an audience of 9,540 persons that comprised 3,640 men, 5,520 women and 380 children.

2.4. Sexual harassment

54. Although addressed by national legislation solely in relation to the workplace, sexual harassment is frequent in schools and an obstacle to the enrolment, retention and satisfactory performance of girls in schools. A study conducted by UNICEF in 2008 on violence against children revealed the following rates: sexual harassment 48.5 per cent, sex talk 43.7 per cent, attempted rape 21.7 per cent, rape 19.9 per cent and sexual misconduct 15.4 per cent. Of those offences, 20.1 per cent are committed by instructors. Statistical surveys conducted by the Ministry of Education and Literacy for the period 2010-2013 report 365 cases of sexual harassment in school.

55. The following activities have been carried out in this area:

- Inclusion of a module on sexual harassment as an "illicit relation" in the initial training of teachers;
- Prohibition of sexual harassment by school regulations;
- Setting up of relevant early learning clubs for girls in educational establishments;

- Training of women sponsors and leaders of the above clubs in gender issues and gender-based violence in schools;
- In the Labour Code of 2008, prohibition of sexual harassment in the workplace under article 37 and punishment of all forms of that offence under article 422;
- Prohibition of sexual harassment under the Act on General Regulations for Armed Forces personnel;
- Organization of the 2013 session of CNSEF on "Sexual harassment problems in schools in Burkina Faso: causes, consequences and legal challenges".

2.5. Female genital mutilation (FGM)

56. According to the Demographic and Health Survey (EDS) 2010, excision is still more widespread in rural than in urban areas, while the percentage of excised women is highest in the Centre-Est, Nord, Centre-Nord and Plateau-Central regions (respectively, 90, 88, 87 and 88 per cent). The rate of excision is broken down by age as follows: age 0-14, 13 per cent; under 5, 4.7 per cent; age 5-9, 14.2 per cent; age 10-14, 25 per cent; and age 15-49, 76 per cent. Statistics for 2011 show 92 women or girls victims of genital mutilation (MASSN, 2011).

57. The following steps have been taken against the above practice:

- Conviction, in 2009, of 241 persons for excision and complicity in excision (according to data concerning the country's district courts as a whole);
- Implementation of a joint programme between Burkina Faso and Mali and a related action plan, 2009-2013, for encouraging the termination of the cross-border practice of female circumcision;
- Adoption by the United Nations General Assembly of draft resolution A/C.3/67/L.21, dated 17 October 2012, on intensifying global efforts for the elimination of female genital mutilations, based on an initial proposal submitted by Burkina Faso;
- On 2-10 February 2012, commemoration of the International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation on the following theme: "From Malabo to New York: Support the Resolution of the United Nations General Assembly Banning FGM in the World";
- Broadcast of video advertisements, rerun films and video clips on excision, and related shows, song performances and information and awareness-raising meetings;
- In 2012, distribution of 250 promotional booklets and brochures on the theme "I shall not circumcise my daughter";
- Comprehensive care for more than 2,854 women suffering from the effects of FGM (free repair, and clitoris reconstruction for CFAF 7,500);
- In 2012, inclusion of modules on FGM in the curriculum of the National School of the Gendarmerie, the National School of the Financial Authorities, and the National Social Welfare Training Institute. Advocacy is under way for the creation of similar modules in the other vocational training schools;
- Establishment of a free "SOS excision" helpline (80 00 11 12).

2.6. Measures taken for excluded persons and older persons

58. According to RGPH 2006, of the 712,573 persons aged 60 or more who accounted for 5.1 per cent of the total population, 379,299 (53.22 per cent) were women. Protection of those older persons is one of the Government's major concerns.

59. The following measures and activities have taken place in support of the group in question:

- 80 per cent reduction on health professionals' fee rates in public health establishments for the elderly;
- In March 2012, preparation of a national action plan to combat social exclusion of persons accused of witchcraft, 2012-2016;
- State allocation of CFAF 25 million for care for exclusion victims in 10 care centres;
- Construction by the Government of a more convenient new centre in which to relocate the Delwendé de Tanghin centre, sheltering 327 excluded women affected by the 1 September 2009 floods, at a cost of CFAF 416 million, without equipment;
- In October 2012, organization of a national forum of older persons in order to facilitate dialogue and coordination with them.

60. A draft Act on the promotion and protection of the rights of older persons has been initiated in order to strengthen the legal framework for the protection of that vulnerable group. The draft has been deposited with the Government for submission to the National Assembly.

3. Measures against trafficking in women and exploitation of the prostitution of women (article 6)

61. The fight against trafficking in women and exploitation of prostitution of women led to the adoption of Act No. 029-2008/AN of 15 May 2008 on combating trafficking in persons and similar practices, which characterizes trafficking in persons as a crime.

3.1. Trafficking in women

62. Statistics for 2011 show 12 women victims of trafficking; and, for the period 2000-2011, 3,536 girls and 3,246 boys victims of trafficking (MASSN, 2011).

63. The following measures have been taken in order to remedy that situation:

- Establishment of watchdog committees at the national and local levels in order to combat trafficking in persons and related practices;
- On 24 October 2012, conclusion of a cooperation agreement between Burkina Faso and Côte d' Ivoire on combating cross-border trafficking;
- In 2013, conduct of a study on human trafficking;
- Establishment of a police force to detect human trafficking in border areas;
- In 2012, establishment of a toll-free number, 80 00 11 52, subsequently simplified to 116, for reporting violence against children.

3.2. Prostitution

64. The practice of prostitution took on alarming proportions in recent years. Although prostitution itself is not prohibited or punished by law, pimping and soliciting on the streets are prosecuted and punished.

65. Act No. 011-2014/AN of 17 April 2014 on combating the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography was adopted in that framework. The victims of such offences are mainly girls.

4. Political and public life of women (articles 7-8)

4.1. National plan (article 7)

4.1.1. Women and political life

66. The will to promote the participation of women led to the adoption of Act No. 010-2009/AN of 16 April 2009, which establishes quotas for legislative and municipal elections and marks a significant change in the legal framework for women's political rights. It aims to promote their full participation in political life by ensuring that any political party's candidate lists effectively include at least 30 per cent of persons of either gender (see section on article 4).

67. However, the above Act has shortcomings. Thus, the proposed quotas do not go far enough towards gender parity on candidate lists and the penalties are not dissuasive enough.

68. Surveys conducted in 2012 on the implementation of the above Act during elections in that year reveal that it did not significantly affect women's political participation. The number of women deputies increased from 13 (out of 111 or 11.71 per cent) in 2007 to 16 (out of 127 or 12 per cent) in 2012 and the number of women municipal councillors increased from 6,400 (out of 17,800 or 35,80 per cent) in 2006 to 3,896 (out of 18,523 or 35.21 per cent) in 2012. Actually, after withdrawal of certain male deputies, the number of women deputies increased from 17 (out of 111 or 15.31 per cent) to 24 (out of 127 or 18.89 per cent).

4.1.2. Percentage of women in the administrative staff of political parties

69. The mixed attitude of political parties towards promoting women's political rights is a major obstacle to a meaningful participation of women in managing political party activities. Indeed, the percentage of women in the executive secretariats of 13 political parties represented in the National Assembly is low (see Table 8 in the annex).

70. That situation is due to the following causes:

- Women's financial dependence on men;
- Women's social role, which stands in the way of their full participation in political life;
- Social and cultural prejudices.

71. Despite the above difficulties, two political parties are headed by women.

4.1.3. Women and public life

72. Although the popular uprising of August 1983 brought about some improvement with regard to the number of women in decision-making positions, few women occupy senior administrative posts.

73. Between 2007 and 2013, the number of women ministers decreased from 14.70 to 13.79 per cent (see Table 3 in the annex).

74. In various civil service categories, men are more numerous than women.

75. Actually, men are a majority in all categories with the exception of contract worker categories 3 and 4 (respectively, 47.73 and 45.72 per cent) and civil servant categories C and E (respectively, 30 and 31.20 per cent), in which women are more numerous because those categories include the subordinate positions of secretary and typist.

76. The obligatory age of retirement depends on category, regardless of gender, as follows:

- Category A: age 60-65;
- Category 1 (State contract workers): age 60;
- Category B: age 58;
- Categories C, D and E: age 55;
- Category 2 (State contract workers): age 58;
- Categories 3, 4 and 5 (State contract workers): age 55.

77. As they are more numerous in the lower categories, women tend to go into retirement earlier.

4.1.4. Women's participation in the activities of civil society organizations (CSOs)

78. In Burkina Faso, many CSOs carry out activities aimed at women's advancement in politics. They engage in advocacy and awareness-raising in order to bring about a change in gender-related attitudes and perceptions. Through their efforts, the various associations have helped to highlight women's political representation. A number of coalitions have cooperated with the parliament on advocating gender quota legislation. Other types of advocacy have consisted in encouraging political parties to promote women on electoral lists. CSOs include, inter alia: Women in Law and Development in Africa (WILDAF)/Burkina, the Gender and Development Research and Action Centre (CRIGED), Diakonia, the Association of Women Lawyers of Burkina Faso (AFJ/BF), the Burkina Faso Coalition for Women's Rights (CBDF), the National Democratic Institute (NDI), the Burkina Faso CBO/NGO Council, the Burkina Faso Council of Associations against STDs/HIV/AIDS (BURCASO), and Mwangaza Action.

4.2. Women representing the country at the regional and international levels (article 8)

79. In Burkina Faso, the law provides for no gender-based discrimination in designating the country's representatives at the international level or with regard to participation in the work of international organizations. Nevertheless, the number of

women in international structures is low. For instance, of the country's 29 ambassadors in 2013, only 6 (20 per cent) were women.

5. Nationality of women (article 9)

80. The Burkina Faso Nationality is acquired by filiation, birth, marriage or naturalization. Acquisition and loss of nationality are governed by the Personal and Family Code, under which women and men enjoy the same rights (article 140 et seq.). Thus, the problem of statelessness does not arise in the country.

6. Measures adopted and activities carried out in the area of education (article 10)

6.1. Primary education

81. Revealing an imbalance between boys and girls from the very beginning of the education system, the primary education gross admission rate (GAR) was 86.9 per cent for boys and 84.4 per cent for girls (with a 2.6 point difference) in the 2010-2011 school year and 93.2 per cent for boys and 92.3 per cent for girls (with a 0.9 point difference) in the 2012-2013 school year.

82. A similar trend has characterized the primary education gross enrolment rate (GER), which was 80.2 per cent for boys and 75.0 per cent for girls (with an approximate 5 point difference) in the 2010-2011 school year and 81.6 per cent for boys and 81.0 per cent for girls, showing a clear improvement, in the 2012-2013 school year.

83. Some of the measures taken by the authorities in order to improve the educational situation of girls are the following:

- Passage of the Act authorizing the country's accession to the Convention against Discrimination in Education adopted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO);
- Launching of a training programme to enhance the teachers' sensitivity to gender issues and to gender-based violence in families and schools; and implementation of a community homes project for girls admitted to elementary school (for the certificate of primary elementary studies or CEPE), so as to facilitate school attendance and reduce the drop-out rate, which in the sixth grade (CM2) reaches massive proportions. In a pilot phase, the project accommodated 60 girls in 2011 and 100 girls in 2012;
- Construction of separate latrines;
- Implementation of the BRIGHT project in the 10 provinces with the poorest records in girls' education, with the aim of improving the rates of enrolment, retention and completion of education among girls;
- Adoption of Act No. 013-2007/AN of 30 July 2007 on education policy, which reaffirmed the priority status of education and the principle of non-discrimination in education.

84. Efforts made to reduce gender disparities have had a positive impact on the various indicators related to school attendance by girls. Their GAR and GER increased, respectively, from 44.5 and 41 per cent in 2002 to 83.8 and 71.2 per cent in 2011, while the GAR and GER gaps between boys and girls decreased, respectively, from 4.8 and 9.4 points in 2008-2009 to 0.9 and 0.6 points in 2013 (see Graphs 1 and 2 in the annex).

85. In the period 2008-2013, the dropout rate remained high among both boys and girls, attaining, in 2013, respectively, 15.4 and 11.8 per cent.

86. The school completion rate increased among girls from 36.3 per cent in 2007 to 59.7 per cent in 2013, namely by 23.4 points, and among boys, in the same period, from 44.7 to 59.3 per cent.

87. The number of teachers increased from 34,837 (23,686 men and 11,151 women) in 2008-2009 to 47,271 (29,099 men and 18,172 women) in 2012-2013.

88. The number of women directors of public primary schools increased from 639 in 2008-2009 to 1,029 in 2012-2013, compared to, respectively, 9,002 and 11,219 men. In 2012-2013, there were 577 men and 81 women itinerant pedagogical advisers (CPIs) and 368 men and 20 women primary school inspectors (IEPDs) heading basic education districts (CEBs) (DEP/MENA, 2013).

6.2. Specific measures for the education of disabled persons, particularly girls and women

89. Girls with disabilities are exposed to a twofold inequality because, first, they are subject to the social and cultural constraints imposed on women in general and, second, their disability deprives them of certain natural means of defence. Their education is not a priority for their families. Efforts are made in that connection in the general framework of inclusive education.

90. The Government and its partners have taken specific measures in support of underprivileged social groups, particularly girls. Thus, Act No. 012-2010/AN of 1 April 2010 on the protection and promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities and its implementing legislation stipulate social measures for persons with disabilities in the area of education. A multisectoral national council for the protection and advancement of disabled persons was created by Decree No. 2012-406/PRES/PM/MASSN/MEF/MS of 15 May 2012 in order to unite the efforts of the various stakeholders involved in the promotion and protection of the rights of disabled persons and to ensure that their concerns are taken into account more effectively.

91. There is an increasing number of education centres for persons living with a disability.

92. Such facilities comprise:

- 700 inclusive schools (98 per cent of which are public) attended by approximately 5,600 disabled children, namely on average 8 children per school;
- 17 specialized schools attended by 767 disabled children and offering education adapted to a specific disability (deafness, blindness or mental

deficiencies) with a view to an open society of learning based on tolerance and diversity;

- 7 inclusive schools attended by 89 pupils and practicing gradual educational integration through transition classes in which the pupils familiarize themselves with communication tools adapted to their individual disability before enrolling in formal education (UNICEF, Current Status of Inclusive Education in Burkina Faso, final report, 2013).

6.3. Budget share allocated to education

93. The education budget increased from CFAF 166,791,544 in 2009 to CFAF 262,787,060 in 2013 (see Table 5 in the annex).

6.4. Secondary and higher education

94. At the national level, the gender breakdown of secondary education students was 53 per cent boys and 46,15 per cent girls in the 2008-2009 school year and 51.75 per cent boys and 48.25 per cent girls in the 2012-2013 school year. That reduction in the gap from approximately 7 to 3 points has been due to the Government's efforts and specific measures for promoting girls' education. In the above period, the gap was reduced from 1.5 to 0.4 points in urban and from 11 to 5 points in rural areas.

95. In urban areas, parity was almost achieved in 2008-2009 (with 49.28 per cent girls and 50.72 per cent boys) and the trend was even reversed in 2012-2013 (with 50.18 per cent girls and 49.8 per cent boys).

96. In rural areas, in the same school years, the respective gap was approximately 9 and 5 points. Although it declined by 4 points, that gap remains significant.

97. According to a study on the educational situation of girls carried out in 2009 by the Directorate of Secondary Education of Girls in the Ministry of Secondary and Higher Education and Scientific Research, the gap in rural areas is greater than indicated in the preceding paragraph.

98. In post-primary and secondary education, scholastic achievement is generally lower among girls than among boys (see Tables 11 and 12 in the annex).

99. The following steps were taken in order to raise the number of girls in secondary and higher education:

- Creation in 2011 of the Directorate of Girls' Education and Gender Equality (DEFPG);
- Establishment of a national committee to monitor parity between girls and boys in school enrolment;
- Establishment of quotas for girls in university residences and incentives to encourage deserving girls;
- In June 2012, development of an advocacy strategy to speed up girls' education at the post-primary and secondary levels;
- Establishment of a national council for the prevention of school violence;

- Adoption of a national strategy for the construction of education infrastructure (community homes for girls, separate latrines for girls and boys, and access ramps for disabled persons).

6.5. Non-formal education and literacy

100. Gender-related disparities also characterize non-formal basic education. The literacy rate, 62.9 per cent in urban and 19.2 per cent in rural areas in 2007, is 36.7 per cent among men and 21 per cent among women.

101. Female learners attending the various non-formal education initiatives are more numerous than male ones.

102. In order to reduce such disparities, the Government adopted in 2011 the National Literacy Acceleration Programme (PRONAA) with a view to attaining a 60 per cent literacy rate by 2015. To that end, 14,509 literacy centres were opened during the 2011-2012 literacy campaign, compared to 9,763 in 2010-2011. The number of enrolled learners increased from 81,231 (of whom 52,345 or 64.43 per cent were women) to, in 2012-2013, 376,823 (of whom 256,415 or 68 per cent were women and 120,408 or 32 per cent were men) (MENA, 2013).

6.6. Constraints and difficulties related to the education/literacy of girls/women

103. Of the multiple and multifaceted factors that, according to the various education actors, impede the implementation of article 10, note should be made of the following:

- Non-enforcement of provisions on the compulsory enrolment of children in school;
- Inadequate resources and education infrastructure;
- Parents' poverty;
- Forced and/or early marriage;
- Early and unwanted pregnancy;
- Low level of State allocations to educational and vocational training establishments;
- Gender-based prejudices and stereotypes;
- Placement of girls on jobs considered as immediately remunerative (inter alia, petty trade, activities related to ore extraction, and domestic work);
- Inadequate equipment of classrooms and schools with furniture (desks, benches and chairs), water and sanitation;
- Sexual abuse and harassment in the schools;
- Impunity for perpetrators of various types of abuse endured by girls;
- Numerous family tasks carried out by women.

7. Employment and vocational training (article 11)

7.1. Legal framework

104. The implementation of article 11 is characterized by the establishment of a legal framework prohibiting any discrimination against women in the area of employment and by equal access to labour law, social security and remuneration.

105. An analysis of legislative and regulatory provisions clearly demonstrates that Burkina Faso, which has ratified most of the treaties related to the promotion and protection of employment, has incorporated them into its domestic law.

At the international level

106. Burkina Faso is party to most of the conventions of the International Labour Organization (ILO) related to the promotion and protection of the rights of women.

At the national level

107. In addition to the Constitution and the Personal and Family Code, the Labour Code, governed by Act No. 028-2008/AN of 13 May 2008, contains various provisions in support of women's work and vocational training. Such provisions relate to discrimination, sexual harassment, dismissal, equal pay and sanctions for non-compliance.

7.2. Right to equal remuneration

108. Article 182 of the Labour Code provides for equal remuneration.

109. However, save under a court decision, a woman is ineligible for family benefits or parenthood deduction from the single tax on wages and salary (IUTS), which are automatically granted to the father. That practice is discriminatory and advocacy with the authorities is under way with a view to its termination.

7.3. Policies and programmes for the promotion of women's employment

110. On 15 May 2008, Burkina Faso adopted the National Employment Policy (NCB), a continuation of the Government's efforts to combat poverty and promote economic development and social progress.

111. That policy advocates and provides for innovative activities for promoting women's employment for reasons of equity. Affirmative action is undertaken with regard to access to credit. The Fund to Support Youth Initiatives, established in order to promote youth employment, offers women entrepreneurs a concessional interest rate of 3.5 per cent, compared to 4 per cent for men.

112. The Special Job Creation Programme for Young Persons and Women (PSCE/JF), which has an annual cost of CFAF 11,086,139,000, is expected to generate 54,000 jobs on average every year, create 10,000 work opportunities and train 45,100 young graduates and rural youth with the aim of reducing unemployment and underemployment among young persons and women.

113. The mid-term review of PSCE/JF (2011-2014) established the following results:

- 13,634 beneficiaries, including 6,599 women, placed under a work experience programme;
- 2,137 beneficiaries, including 809 women, placed on pre-employment internships;
- 5,433 graduates, including 1,730 women, trained in business administration;
- 7,684 persons having dropped out of school or having had no schooling, including 3,767 women, recruited for highly labour-intensive public works in the 49 urban communities;
- At least 257 associations and women's groups provided with technologies adapted to their production and processing needs;
- 3,400 volunteer security assistants, including women, recruited to help road safety officers in the large cities.

7.4. Women and unemployment

114. Unemployment affects women more. According to the Comprehensive Survey of Household Living Conditions (EICVM) 2009, carried out by the National Institute of Statistics and Demography (INSD), the unemployment rate is 3.9 per cent among men and 6.9 per cent among women, broken down into 0.5 per cent among men and 1.6 per cent among women in rural areas and, respectively, 13 and 23.7 per cent in urban areas.

8. Access to health care (article 12)

8.1. Overview and organization of the medical system

115. In the area of health, Burkina Faso has one of the weakest profiles in the West African subregion. The overall morbidity and mortality rates remain high, with child mortality at 184 per 1,000 and maternal mortality at 484 per 100,000 live births.

116. The national health policy, adopted in 2000 and implemented through the National Health Development Plan (PNDS) 2001-2010, aims to improve the population's health and well-being by 2020.

117. The country's health care system comprises the following three levels, with clear hierarchical links:

- Central level, organized around the Cabinet of the Minister;
- Intermediate level, with regional offices responsible for national health policy implementation at the regional level;
- Peripheral level, with health-care districts which constitute operational structures comprising the following two levels:
  - Health and Social Promotion Centres (CSPSs), which carry out a minimum package of activities;
  - Medical centres with a surgery unit (CMAs), which carry out a complementary package of activities and handle complications;

The above State system is assisted by the private, religious and community sectors in ensuring the population's access to health services.

8.2. Weaknesses of the health care system

118. The health care system is affected by the following weaknesses:

- Inadequate health care infrastructure;
- Quantitatively and qualitatively inadequate medical personnel;
- Limited recourse to family planning;
- Poor geographical distribution of existing personnel;
- Poverty of the population;
- Inadequate care for pregnancy-related illnesses.

8.3. Measures taken by the State in the area of health

119. In order to address the obstacles to women's access to health care, the Government has in recent years focused on a strategy of enhancing the provision of health care and, in particular, improving the accessibility and affordability of health structures.

120. With regard to geographic access, the average distance to health centres decreased from 7.51 km in 2008 to 6.5 km in 2013. New infrastructure has been built (the number of CSPSs increased from 1,373 in 2009 to 1,606 in 2013) and resources have been made available (see Table 8).

121. In order to enhance the capacities of human resources, the State has taken the following steps:

- Regionalization of recruitment so that health care personnel is available in priority areas;
- Increased training and recruitment of specialized personnel;
- Provision of at least one gynaecologist in regional hospital centres (CHR);
- Training of health officers in gynaecology and obstetrics;
- Increase in the share of the State budget allocated to health care from 9.5 per cent in 2009 to 12.5 per cent in 2013;
- Regular updating of health personnel at district level, in hospitals, at the central level and even outside the country on the practices used in treating various cases;
- Between 2009 and 2013, increase in the number of physicians from 483 to 803, nurses from 5,105 to 6,196, birth assistants (midwives, male midwives (maïeuticiens d'État) and qualified and assistant midwives) from 4,005 to 4,755, and ward orderlies from 347 to 713.

122. With regard to affordability, note should made of the following measures:

- Free first treatment of pregnant women and children under 5 for severe malaria;

- Free distribution of long-lasting impregnated mosquito nets (8 million in 2009 and 9.6 million in 2013);
- Free vaccination of pregnant women (93 per cent of that group in 2013) and children, and prenatal care;
- Free antiretroviral treatment;
- Free full prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT, 92.8 per cent coverage in 2009);
- Subsidization of contraceptives (coverage: 69-97 per cent depending on the type of contraceptive);
- Birth-care and emergency obstetric or neonatal care (SONU) subsidization;
- In 2012, increase in the above subsidization to CFAF 3 billion;
- Promotion of and support for the system of cost-sharing and mutual insurance companies;
- Inclusion of family planning in the package of activities of all peripheral health centres;
- In 2011, creation of the Directorate of Mother and Child Health (DSME) in the Ministry for Health, with an additional budget of CFAF 332,454,000 for 2012;
- Testing of the "Schools for husbands, schools for wives" project to involve men in family planning;
- Advocacy and awareness-raising campaigns among traditional and religious leaders and men's groups, in support of involving men in family planning.

8.4. Mental health of women

123. The National Mental Health Programme (PNSM), an earlier initiative adopted in 2002, covered women in groups considered as vulnerable under the programme and thus focused on the situation of:

- Women victims of violence who live under permanent stress and suffer from chronic lack of self-confidence;
- Mentally unbalanced women who give birth. In general, the fathers hide and the newborns are abandoned or taken away;
- Women deprived of the mother-child relation, whose lack creates stress in both the mother and the child.

124. Recurring illnesses requiring hospital treatment are acute psychosis, chronic psychosis and depression. Hospital statistics report a total of 12,642 outpatient consultations in the psychiatry units of national and regional hospitals and CMAs in 2013. In view of the frequency of such ailments, Burkina Faso drew up a new document, the Strategic Plan for Mental Health (PSSM), 2014-2018, validated on 19 November 2013.

125. The Plan aims to promote the prevention of mental disorders and illness in the population as a whole. Although it does not provide for specific activities for women, the Plan constitutes a framework for dealing with the aforementioned illnesses affecting women.

8.5. Establishment of follow-up and accountability mechanisms

126. Mechanisms for systematic monitoring of progress achieved in the area of maternal health include sectoral reviews, assessments of SONU needs and of the availability of reproductive health products, weekly monitoring of such products and maternal deaths and ongoing analysis of data collected routinely through the National Health Information System (SNIS).

127. Burkina Faso participates in "Countdown to 2015", a global movement of academics, governments, international agencies, NGOs and professional associations for maternal, newborn and child survival. A tool for multi-disciplinary and multi-institutional cooperation, the movement tracks progress towards the attainment of health-related MDGs in the 75 countries where more than 95 per cent of all maternal and child deaths occur; and plays a major role in ensuring accountability for the fulfilment of commitments related to the Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health and other international and regional frameworks.

128. In Burkina Faso, the "Countdown to 2015" process began in 2013 with the preparation of a framework document submitted in June of the same year to the leadership of the health sector, and with the mobilization of resources for the implementation of that document. The process includes the establishment of health-care personnel monitoring and accountability mechanisms based on:

- Audits of maternal deaths and near-misses;
- Quality control of health care in public hospitals;
- Technical audits of the implementation of gender strategies (all structures implementing the birth-care and emergency obstetric or neonatal care (SONU) subsidization strategy have been audited);
- Rewards (prizes) for the best health-care districts.

8.6. Strengthening of the role of midwives

129. Midwives are regarded as a key resource for reducing maternal mortality.

130. In 2014, a code of ethics for midwives and male midwives was adopted in order to regulate and supervise those professions.

8.7. Improved access of women to health care in the Sahel region

131. The nomadic life of the population of the Sahel region requires measures encouraging the mobility of service providers.

132. Subject to the same conditions as the other regions with regard to the allocation of financial and material resources and equipment, the Sahel region receives considerable support from NGOs and TFPs, which enable certain districts to offer free maternal, newborn and child health care and to treat women for obstetric fistulas.

8.8. Situation with regard to maternal and child mortality

133. The rate of maternal mortality per 100,000 in Burkina Faso decreased from 339 in 2007 to 242 in 2010, the 2015 target being 221.

134. Despite the State's efforts, child mortality remains high. The probability of death in the first year of life declined from 81 per thousand in 2008 to 66 per thousand in 2012 (source: World Bank, January 2013). Infant mortality is higher among boys than among girls.

135. The following measures have been taken to reduce maternal and child mortality:

- Offer of family planning services, comprehensive prenatal care, qualified assistance at birth, and SONU;
- In 2011, creation of the National Committee to Monitor the Implementation of Strategies and Programmes for Reducing Maternal Mortality pursuant to Order No. 2011/001/MS/CAB on launching the Campaign on Accelerated Reduction of Maternal Mortality in Africa (CARMMA);
- Implementation of comprehensive prenatal consultations, including a childbirth preparation plan for reducing the so-called "three delays" that contribute to maternal mortality;
- Provision of essential perinatal care to the mother and the child in all health facilities, including active management of the third stage of labour (GATPA), which reduces haemorrhage, leading cause of maternal mortality.

8.9. Family planning and abortion

136. Between 1998 and 2010, the proportion of women who know contraceptive methods increased considerably, although such women account for a clear minority of women of childbearing age. According to EDS 2003, the proportion of persons aged 15-49 who knew a modern and traditional contraceptive method was 93 per cent among men and 91 per cent among women. In 2010, those rates were, respectively, 97.4 and 96.6 per cent. In 2013, of the 4,089,198 women of childbearing age, only 1,324,331 used a contraceptive method.

137. Abortion, which ranks third among the causes of maternal mortality in the country, is prohibited except in the cases specified in Act No. 049-2005/AN of 21 December 2005 on reproductive health.

138. In all health facilities with the requisite technical capacity, post-abortion care is ensured through manual vacuum aspiration of the uterus (MVA).

8.10. Women and HIV/AIDS

139. Progress has been made with regard to HIV/AIDS seroprevalence, which, according to EDS IV, 2010, was 1.2 per cent among women in that year. The category of women most affected are sex workers (to the extent of 16.5 per cent according to a 2010 microbiological-behavioural survey).

140. In view of the vulnerability of women and children, the Government has intensified its efforts in this area. Women and children infected with HIV/AIDS receive a treatment allowance. PMTCT services regarding HIV/AIDS are free, including screening, prophylaxis and antiretroviral treatment.

141. Given the social norms that aggravate women's vulnerability to infection with HIV/AIDS or other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), the Government continues

to promote awareness-raising activities on women's rights in general and reproductive health rights in particular.

142. Counselling centres have been established throughout the country in order to raise, among adolescents and other young persons, awareness of high-risk types of behaviour (alcoholism, smoking, drug addiction and unsafe sex).

9. Enjoyment of social and economic benefits by women (article 13)

143. Most women work in the informal sector, including petty trade, agricultural-, livestock- and forest-product processing and marketing, hairdressing and weaving.

144. That sector is characterized by women's considerable vulnerability because of limited access to credit and unstable income.

145. In order to promote women's economic empowerment, the State supports women entrepreneurs with microloans through various national funds and various programmes (see section on article 11).

9.1. Social protection and social security

146. Social protection covers both the formal and the informal sectors. The State endeavours to improve social security benefits. In particular, retirement pensions increased by 5 per cent in 2007, 4 per cent in 2009 and 5 per cent in 2012.

147. Pensions have been paid on a monthly basis since 2009 and are received through the banking system.

148. Progress has been made towards establishing a national health-insurance system for all through the "universal health insurance" project.

9.2. Measures taken to improve the economic situation of women

149. The following measures have been taken in order to improve the economic situation of women by facilitating access to employment, land, credit and other resources, taking into account the social realities:

- Granting of loans to young women entrepreneurs at a concessional interest rate of 3.5 per cent (compared to 4 per cent for men and 2 per cent for disabled persons);
- Granting of loans to 70,818 women in 2011 and 79,411 in 2012, by the Fund to Support Income-generating Activities for Women (FAARF);
- Establishment of 795 multifunctional platforms in the country's 13 regions and concomitant creation of 4,770 permanent jobs for women and 800 indirect employment opportunities in 2011;
- Training of 2,124 women in operational management in 2011; and granting of loans of up to CFAF 10 billion to retrenched and retired men and women wishing to engage in a business. In the period 2010-2011, CFAF 187 million were granted to 43 women to launch activities in the areas of animal breeding, goods transport, catering, preschool education, sale of cereals, and general trade;

- Opening of offices of various State funds in regional or provincial capitals or key communes for greater proximity with the beneficiaries;
- Placement in State and private enterprises of 417 women (out of 877 volunteers) in 2010 and 605 women (out of 1,102 volunteers) in 2011 in order to enhance their employability.

10. Rural women (article 14)

150. Since 2007, the impact of various measures taken by the State has improved the situation of rural women.

10.1. Access of rural women to credit

151. The Government has adopted a national micro-finance strategy and a related action plan, 2012-2016, in order to facilitate the access of the population, particularly rural women and young persons, to diversified and adapted financial products and services.

10.2. Access of rural women to health care

152. Measures implemented in the area of health have brought health centres closer to women by increasing the number of CSPSs, reducing the centres' range of operation and carrying out various awareness-raising activities on the ground.

153. Numerous measures have been taken to facilitate rural women's access to health care (see section on article 12).

154. Since 2008, the Ministry of Health has been promoting an approach consisting in "cooperation with individuals, families and communities in order to improve maternal and neonatal health". In that connection, a forum of women of childbearing age and a forum of women counsellors offer maternal and child health diagnoses in the women's locality and propose solutions in the form of a plan of action.

10.3. Access of rural women to land

155. Although under Burkina Faso legislation they are allowed access to land, women in practice are confronted with challenges related mainly to land title possession and verification.

156. Wildland is in fact subject to both customary and modern law, with customs unfavourable to women carrying more weight. Accordingly the State, with the support of the Millennium Challenge Account — Burkina Faso (MCA-BF) for the implementation of its land security project, has taken the following steps: dissemination of legislation on rural property, assistance to stakeholders in obtaining such land security documents as rural property certificates (APFRs), and possibility to lend or rent out land, including to women. Thus, 12,887 applications for APFRs have been filed. Of the certificates established, 103 have been issued to women in 17 pilot rural municipalities.

157. Technical specifications for developed areas provide that 30 per cent of the land concerned must be earmarked for women.

10.4. Access of rural women to vocational training and literacy

158. A number of measures have been taken by various actors to promote literacy and vocational training for women (see section on article 10, subsection 6.3). Because of their workload, however, only 19.2 per cent of rural women avail themselves of literacy campaigns, compared to 62.9 per cent of urban women.

159. In the area of vocational training, the following numbers of rural women have received capacity building in the various sectors:

- Livestock/meat sector: 8,981 women;
- Milk sector: 1,425 women entrepreneurs;
- Traditional poultry sector: 6,469 women breeders;
- Pork sector: 2,339 women entrepreneurs;
- Honey sector: 15 women;
- Poultry breeding techniques: 119 women;
- Poultry vaccination: 46 women trained and 15 women retrained;
- Bio-digester construction and maintenance: 1,200 persons, of whom 50 per cent women.

10.5. Access of rural women to water and sanitation

160. The water sector is a State priority. The National Plan for Water Supply and Sanitation (PN-AEPA), 2006-2015, adopted in December 2006, contains a rural and an urban component.

161. Access to drinking water in rural areas increased from 56.6 per cent in 2010 to 58.5 per cent in 2011 through the creation of 1,996 modern water sources (PEMs) and 35 simplified drinking water supply points (AEPSs) and the rehabilitation of 984 PEMs and 6 AEPSs. According to a 2011 national survey on household access to family sanitation facilities, that rate is still only 0.8 per cent.

10.6. Rural women's access to decision-making

162. Rural women usually participate in the decision-making process through groups, associations, women's coordination structures, community infrastructure management bodies (management committees, village land management committees, parents' associations (APEs), mothers educators' associations (AMEs), and water sources management committees).

163. Women's participation in leading the activities of local bodies (village development councils (CVDs) and municipal and regional councils) declined from 35.80 per cent in 2006 to 21 per cent in 2012. In order to enhance such participation, the documents establishing CVDs provide for obligatory involvement of at least two women.

11. Equality before the law and in civil matters (article 15)

11.1. Background

164. Neither the Constitution nor subsequent legislation discriminate against women with respect to the exercise of rights and freedoms. Thus, any woman having attained majority may bring legal action and give testimony, on equal terms with men. In general, women enjoy equal access to legal services, particularly in the area of legal assistance. They may freely conclude contracts in their name, administer their own property, and execute wills. However, the Personal and Family Code, which governs rights and obligations between spouses, contains certain provisions that discriminate against women.

11.2. Measures taken

165. In order to eliminate weaknesses and inconsistencies in its legislation, the State has proceeded with reforms aimed at removing from the legal system any provision or norm that may infringe women's rights.

166. In order to facilitate further the access of vulnerable population groups, particularly women, to justice, the State established in 2013 a legal aid fund endowed with CFAF 100 million and expected to meet the needs of women victims of gender-based violence.

167. Certain prisons and detention facilities include separate quarters for women.

12. Matrimonial and family law (article 16)

12.1. Background

168. Matrimonial and family law is laid down in the Personal and Family Code. Matters such as cohabitation (of two unmarried partners) are treated in article 233 of the Code, which provides for no legal effect of types of cohabitation other than marriage officiated before a registrar. However, according to a study on basic knowledge, attitudes and practices, approximately 75 per cent of Burkina Faso nationals have not been formally married at a registry office. In the event of separation without substantial grounds, or of death of a partner, a separated or surviving partner may be found in precarious circumstances although the two partners may have lived together for a number of years. Moreover, article 294 of the Code stipulates that the family residence is chosen by the spouses by mutual agreement but, in the absence of such agreement, it is the husband who chooses and, if his choice is detrimental to the family, the final choice is made by a judge. That provision is discriminatory as it does not allow for equality between the spouses in the said choice.

169. With regard to inheritance law, article 741 of the Code stipulates that a surviving judicially separated spouse may not inherit her/his deceased spouse's assets. That article is inconsistent with article 411 of the Code, under which in the event of separation the marital bond is maintained and so are the spouses' rights and duties, except the obligation to reside together and support their children in common.

12.2. Measures taken

170. In its ongoing quest for reducing all gender inequalities and inequities, the State undertook to review the Personal and Family Code in order to remove all provisions that lead or may lead to discrimination against women and girls. A study conducted to that end in 2012 identified 25 discriminatory provisions and proposed other provisions compatible with the relevant international instruments.

Part III: Implementation of recommendations

171. The Committee has urged the State party to ensure protection for asylum-seeking and refugee women and their children in line with international standards.

172. Article 9 of the Constitution guarantees free movement of persons and goods, free choice of residence and the right of asylum.

173. In accordance with international standards, the State of Burkina Faso continuously develops initiatives to provide care for persons displaced as a result of conflicts in their countries of origin. For instance, since 2012, support and protection have been offered to thousands of men, women and children displaced as a result of the crisis in Mali.

174. According to statistics provided by the National Commission for Refugees (CONAREF), the number of Malian refugees as of 21 June 2012 was of 65,009. O those refugees, 51.7 per cent were men and 48.3 per cent women. They were grouped in the Centre, Hauts Bassins and Sahel regions.

175. In order to deal with that crisis, the Government prepared a plan to respond to the influx of the above refugees. The plan aimed to:

- Identify and assess the protection needs of those refugees in line with international commitments under refugee law;
- Assess sectoral needs so as to improve care for the refugee population;
- Ensure the mobilization of national and international assistance for the said refugees;
- Ensure better coordination between the Government and its partners.

176. In order to cover all the refugees' needs, the response plan, implemented by each ministry in its area of competence, identified 15 priority action areas, including protection and promotion of human rights, food, health, education, the environment, water, sanitation, survival equipment and animal resources.

177. The Ministry for the Advancement of Women and Gender Equality has been responsible for gender issues, particularly relevant training, provision of hygiene kits and grain mills, and financial support for income-generating activities for refugee women.

178. In that connection, the Government mobilized CFAF 8,954,934,537 to ensure care for the Malian refugees and the host population.

179. The Committee has recommended to the State party to establish a comprehensive system of data collection and assessment of trends in the situation of women; and has encouraged the State party to include specific, measurable and

time-bound indicators with a view to allow the adequate monitoring and analysis of results over time.

180. With technical and financial support from the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), the National Institute of Statistics and Demography (INSD) has undertaken to produce every two years, beginning in 2010, a booklet entitled "Women and Men in Burkina Faso", which provides an overview of gender relations in the areas of population, health, education, employment, security and decision-making.

181. The Directorate of Sectoral Statistics in the Ministry for the Advancement of Women and Gender Equality is responsible for the collection and analysis of gender-specific data.

182. The Statistical Yearbook for the Advancement of Women provides information regarding 2010. The 2013 edition, which is being finalized, provides information regarding 2011 and 2012.

183. The systems in place are based on specific and measurable time-bound indicators and thus provide the development actors with reliable data for monitoring and evaluating public and private policies.

184. The Committee has urged the State party to utilize fully the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in order to reinforce the provisions of the Convention; and has requested the State party to include information thereon in its next periodic report.

185. The numerous initiatives undertaken in implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action include the following:

- In 2010, preparation, publication and dissemination of the 15-year review and appraisal report concerning the instruments in question;
- Establishment of a national fund for gender equality to finance the activities of the various operational action plans of the National Gender Policy (PNG).

186. The Committee has called for the integration of the gender perspective and an explicit reflection of the provisions of the Convention (in all efforts aimed at the achievement of the MDGs) and for the inclusion of the information thereon in the State's next periodic report.

187. With regard to that information, please see Part II on the implementation of the Convention.

188. The Committee has:

- Requested a broad dissemination of the concluding observations in order to make the people, including Government officials, politicians, parliamentarians and women's and human rights organizations, aware of the steps that have been taken to ensure the de jure and de facto equality of women and the further measures that are required in that regard;
- Encouraged the State party to organize a series of meetings to discuss progress achieved in the implementation of the Committee's observations;
- Recommended that the State party ensure that the dissemination extend to the local community level;

– Requested the State party to continue to disseminate widely, in particular to women's and human rights organizations, the Committee's general recommendations, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly on the theme "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century".

189. The following steps have been taken in this area:

- A workshop for feedback on the presentation of the sixth periodic report under the Convention was organized in February 2011 for actors and the technical and financial partners. The workshop was broadly covered by the national and international press. At the central level, copies of the sixth report were distributed to the members of the National Commission to Follow up on the Commitments of Burkina Faso regarding the Advancement of Women (CNSEF) during workshops;
- The Committee's recommendations were transmitted to all bodies concerned, namely the ministries, public institutions and civil society organizations (CSOs).

190. The Committee has requested the State party to provide, within two years, written information on the steps undertaken to implement the recommendations contained in paragraphs 22 and 50 of the concluding observations.

191. A mid-term report on the implementation of the recommendations concerned was prepared and submitted to the General Assembly of the United Nations.

192. The Committee has:

– Recommended that the State party avail itself of technical and financial assistance from the international community in the development and execution of a comprehensive programme aimed at the implementation of the Committee's recommendations and the Convention as a whole;

– Called upon the State party to strengthen its cooperation with relevant United Nations organizations, specialized agencies and programmes and to envisage the possibility of regional cooperation and exchange of best practices with countries of the region.

193. Burkina Faso has received technical and financial support from various organizations in order to implement the Committee's recommendations, particularly with regard to:

- Collecting data on the contribution of women's associations to the implementation of the Convention;
- Following up on the implementation of the recommendations in question;
- Training the members of CNSEF and the gender promotion units of the ministries and institutions in the techniques and process of preparation of periodic reports under the Convention;
- Developing and implementing the Joint Programme to Combat Violence against Women and Girls (PC/VEFF).

194. In the framework of strengthening cooperation with relevant organizations, a consultative meeting of ministers and experts in gender equality issues and women's empowerment in the West African subregion was held in October 2010. This meeting provided an opportunity to exchange and share good practices in the promotion of gender equality.

195. The Committee has requested the State party to ensure the participation of all ministries and public bodies in the preparation of its next periodic report and to consult a variety of women's and human rights organizations.

196. A committee consisting of representatives of institutions, ministries and CSOs was set up for the preparation of this report; and has followed up the entire report preparation process from data collection through the transmission of the report to the Committee.

197. The Committee has urged the State party to disseminate widely the Convention and the Optional Protocol among the population, the State bodies (ministries, parliamentarians and the judiciary), NGOs, and women in particular.

198. Various activities have been carried out in order to inform the population on the implementation of the Convention. They include the following:

- The Convention was translated into four national languages (mooré, dioula, fulfuldé and gulmancema), reproduced in 1,000 copies in each language, and distributed to the population and to central and decentralized bodies;
- On 25 November of each year, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women is observed, with the focus on a topic related to an article of the Convention.

Conclusion

199. This appraisal has shown that, in the period 2007-2013, the State generally made efforts to carry out the recommendations of the Committee. However, despite the existence of numerous legal mechanisms, women continue to be victims of forms of discrimination related to, inter alia, difficulties in implementing certain enactments, gaps in the law, and legislation that still contains provisions which discriminate against women.

200. Certain concerns formulated by the Committee after earlier evaluations are still relevant. As noted, social and cultural inertia, combined with the lack of specific legislation and policies to protect women, remain factors that strongly impede the improvement of their living conditions. Moreover, the situation cannot be fully evaluated owing to missing or insufficiently disaggregated data.

201. The main problems identified may be summarized as follows:

- Non-compliance of certain provisions of domestic legislation with the Convention;
- Inadequate implementation of legislation;
- Small percentage of women in the parliament, the Government and high-level administration posts.

202. However, one may note with satisfaction the country's policy commitment to translating the rights of women into action, as borne out by the adoption of various national policies, plans and strategies in all priority areas of women's rights and gender equality, particularly the National Gender Policy (PNG), approved in 2009 and aimed, inter alia, at eradicating all forms of gender inequality and inequity so as to promote the realization of the social, cultural, economic and political potential of every citizen.

203. In the area of women's participation in decision-making, considerable efforts are made, including the adoption of the Act establishing quotas for legislative and municipal elections. Admittedly, use of the quota system to increase women's participation in political life has not produced the expected results. The Government, however, engages in awareness-raising and advocacy activities seeking to enhance the representation of women.

204. Alongside the State, civil society organizations are mobilizing increasingly in activities benefiting women and participate in the implementation of plans and programmes relating to women's rights within the context of various cooperation agreements with the country.

205. To some degree, this general mobilization has helped to improve perceptions about the situation of women and to create awareness of their rights.

206. However, challenges remain, notably with regard to the State's commitment to reviewing domestic legislation in order to remove from the legal system, matrimonial law in particular, any provision that may lead to discrimination against women and girls.

207. Over and above the aforementioned Act on gender quota, there are plans to adopt legislation establishing quotas for appointive posts so as to increase the percentage of women in the parliament, the Government and high-level administration.

208. The promotion of a specific enactment, initiated by the parliament, on violence against women and girls shall be accelerated.